

ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT THE

Fifty-Third Annual Commencement

OF THE

National Medical College

(MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE COLUMBIAN UNIVERSITY.)

BY

J. C. WELLING, L.L.D.,

PROF. W. B. DRINKARD, M.D., M.R.C.S.,

AND

GABRIEL F. JOHNSTON, M.D.

MARCH 11, 1875.

WASHINGTON, D. C.:

W. KOCH, PRINTER, 309 EIGHTH STREET.
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Faculty.

JAMES C. WELLING, L.L.D.,
President.

WILLIAM P. JOHNSTON, M. D.,
*Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children, and
President of the Faculty.*

A. Y. P. GARNETT, M. D.,
Emeritus Professor of Clinical Medicine.

JOHN C. RILEY, A. M., M. D.,
Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics, and Dean of the Faculty.

J. FORD THOMPSON, M. D.,
Professor of Surgery.

W. W. JOHNSTON, M. D.,
Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine.

A. F. A. KING, M. D.,
Professor of Obstetrics and the Diseases of Women and Children.

EDWARD T. FRISTOE, A. M., LL. D.,
Professor of Chemistry and Toxicology.

WILLIAM B. DRINKARD, M. D., M. R. C. S.,
Professor of Anatomy.

WILLIAM LEE, M. D.,
Professor of Physiology.

Z. T. SOWERS, M. D.,
Demonstrator of Anatomy and Curator of the Museum.

Graduates.

Name.	Residence.	Subject of Thesis.
JOHN GODFREY.....	Alabama.....	Anthropogenesis.
CLAYTON A. HOOVER.....	Dist. of Col.....	Influence of the Intellect [upon the body.
GABRIEL F. JOHNSTON....	Dist. of Col.....	Animal Temperature.
GEORGE LUNNEY.....	South Carolina.....	Nymphæa Odorata.
BENJ. S. SEYMOUR.....	New York.....	Bronchocele.
WILFRED W. STREETER.....	Pennsylvania.....	Migrane.
WALTER TAYLOR.....	West Virginia.....	Typhoid Fever.
ROSWELL WALDO.....	Ohio.....	Effects of Alcohol in [health and disease.

—o—

Prize for Junagural Essay

was awarded to W. W. STREETER, of Pennsylvania.

Honorable mention was made of the *theses* by C. A. HOOVER, of the District of Columbia, and JOHN GODFREY, of Alabama.

—o—

Officers of the Class.

EAMES B. RANKIN, *President.*

J. A. HARRISON, *Vice President.* R. W. SHUFELD'T, JR., *Sec'y.*

ROSWELL WALDO, *Treasurer.*

—o—

Executive Committee.

GEORGE LUNNEY, *Chairman.*

CLAYTON A. HOOVER,

JOHN GODFREY,

HENRY K. SIMPSON,

E. R. REYNOLDS.

STUDENTS IN THE MEDICAL COLLEGE.

<i>Name.</i>	<i>State.</i>
BAIN, JAMES R.....	District of Columbia.
BALL, CHARLES A.....	District of Columbia.
BEAN, TARLETON H.....	Pennsylvania.
BETTES, EUGENE.....	Massachusetts.
CARROLL, JAMES J.....	District of Columbia.
COURTNEY, JAMES.....	Michigan.
CUNNINGHAM, JOHN S.....	U. S. Navy.
DANA, CHARLES L.....	Vermont.
DEEBLE, H. M.....	District of Columbia.
DOBSON, H. A.....	New York.
DURNALL, HORACE W.....	Pennsylvania.
DYE, ROBERT S.....	New York.
EASTMAN, J. McLEAN.....	California.
FLEMING, THOMAS.....	Virginia.
GILBERT, CHARLES B.....	Maine.
GODFREY, JOHN.....	Alabama.
GOODE, G. BROWN.....	Connecticut.
GRAHAM, JAMES W.....	District of Columbia.
GRIFFETH, ARTHUR.....	New York.
HARRISON, JOHN S.....	District of Columbia.
HOLMES, CHARLES.....	New York.
HOOVER, C. A.....	District of Columbia.
JOHNSTON, G. F.....	District of Columbia.
KEAY, JOHN T.....	New York.
KINNEY, J. B.....	New York.
LINSKEY, C. H. J.....	Virginia.
LUNNEY, GEORGE.....	South Carolina.
MILLER, AUGUST.....	District of Columbia.
MILNER JAMES W.....	Illinois.
McDERMOTT, A. F.....	New York.
NAGURA, OSAM.....	Japan.
NOURSE, C. J.....	District of Columbia.
ORNELAS, PLUTARCO.....	Mexico.
RANKIN, EAMES B.....	District of Columbia.
REITZ, GUSTAVUS L.....	District of Columbia.
ROBBINS, E. B.....	Missouri.
ROBERTS, P. W.....	New York.
SCHAEFFER, G. C.....	District of Columbia.
SCHUERMANN, CARL W. Jr.....	District of Columbia.
SCOTT, JOHN.....	Ohio.
SEYMOUR, BEN. S.....	New York.
SHUFELDT, R. W. Jr.....	Connecticut.
SIMPSON, HENRY K.....	District of Columbia.
SMITH, CHARLES.....	Massachusetts.
STREETER, W. W.....	Pennsylvania.
TAYLOR, WALTER.....	West Virginia.
WADSWORTH, A. S.....	Massachusetts.
WALDO, ROSWELL.....	Ohio.
WALTON, J. R.....	District of Columbia.

Graduates, 8; Undergraduates, 41—Total, 49.

Correspondence.

NATIONAL MEDICAL COLLEGE.

MED. DEPT. OF COLUMBIAN UNIVERSITY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 22, 1875.*

JAMES C. WELLING, L.L.D.,

President of the Columbian University.

SIR: The Students of the Class of 1874 and 1875 desire us to extend to you our sincere thanks for your able and eloquent address delivered to the Graduating Class on the occasion of the Annual Commencement, and respectfully request a copy of the same for publication.

Very respectfully, your obedient servants.

GEORGE LUNNEY,
C. A. HOOVER,
E. B. RANKIN,

Committee.

THE COLUMBIAN UNIVERSITY,

WASHINGTON, *March 23, 1875.*

GENTLEMEN: It gives me great pleasure, in compliance with your polite request, to place at your disposal a copy of the remarks I had the honor to make to the Graduating Class of our Medical College on the 11th instant, only regretting that the brief address for which you ask should not have been more worthy of the interesting occasion to which it related.

Accept, I pray you, my thanks for the obliging terms of your note, and permit me to add that I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

JAMES C. WELLING,

President.

GEORGE LUNNEY, M. D.,

C. A. HOOVER, M. D.,

Mr. E. B. RANKIN,

Committee.

NATIONAL MEDICAL COLLEGE,

MEDICAL DEPT. OF COLUMBIAN UNIVERSITY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 20, 1875.*

PROF. W. B. DRINKARD, M. D., M. R. C. S.

DEAR SIR: We, the undersigned, on behalf of the Class of 1874 and 1875, do hereby tender to you our heartfelt thanks for the able and eloquent address delivered by you to the Graduating Class, on the occasion of the Annual Commencement; we further desire to express our heartfelt thanks for favoring us with your presence on that occasion, notwithstanding your recent illness; and we respectfully request a copy of said address for publication.

Very respectfully, your obedient servants,

GEORGE LUNNEY,
C. A. HOOVER,
E. B. RANKIN,

Committee.

1403 NEW YORK AVENUE,

March 22, 1875.

GENTLEMEN: In compliance with the request contained in your communication, I have the honor to enclose the manuscript of the address delivered before you on the 11th instant.

Thanking you for the kind language of your note, I am, very sincerely yours,

WM. BEV. DRINKARD.

GEORGE LUNNEY, M. D.,

C. A. HOOVER, M. D.,

E. B. RANKIN,

Committee.

NATIONAL MEDICAL COLLEGE,

MEDICAL DEPT., COLUMBIAN UNIVERSITY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 20, 1875.

GABRIEL F. JOHNSTON, M. D.

SIR: Your Classmates desire us to express to you the pleasure afforded them by the Valedictory delivered by you at the last Annual Commencement, and we respectfully request a copy of the same for publication.

Very respectfully, your obedient servants,

GEORGE LUNNEY,

C. A. HOOVER,

E. B. RANKIN,

Committee.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,

March 22, 1875.

DRS. LUNNEY AND HOOVER, AND MR. RANKIN,

Committee.

GENTLEMEN: In compliance with the request contained in your polite note of yesterday's date. I send you, herewith, a copy of the valedictory address which I had the honor of delivering on the occasion of our last Commencement.

I thank you for your kind, but I fear undeserved, expressions of appreciation.

I am, gentlemen, with great regard, most truly yours,

GABRIEL F. JOHNSTON.

ADDRESS

OF

J. C. WELLING, L. L. D.,

PRESIDENT OF COLUMBIAN UNIVERSITY.

GENTLEMEN : You are about to take upon yourselves the obligations of a responsible ministry in the service of God and of your fellow-men. Your call to this ministry can be authenticated only by the learning and skill to which you have already attained in the science and art of medicine. The diploma which I am about to place in your hands is but the symbol and academic guarantee of the proficiency which you are believed by your teachers to have reached during the period of your novitiate. You can make full proof of this ministry only by bringing to the discharge of its duties an ever-growing advancement in the principles with which your minds have been imbued. As the professors of a medical faith, which is at once historic and scientific, you are pledged to cultivate a spirit of reverence for the great body of ascertained truth which has been handed down to you by the past generations, and at the same time to cherish a rational skepticism with regard to all unproved facts and unverified theories. It would, indeed, be a sad reflection on the wisdom of man and the providential order of the world, if the great investigators and thinkers, who have wrought before you in the domain of medicine and surgery, could be left out of account in making up the faggot of your professional opinions. The didactic system in which you have been reared is a system that bears in its body the marks of gradual and successive growth through more than two thousand years.

You have been wisely taught not to renounce your share in the grand inheritance bequeathed to you by the fathers and votaries of an art which has such honorable traditions. To renounce this legacy at the dictate of any one among the new-fangled empiricisms which propose to lay the foundations of medicine entirely anew, would be to pronounce upon

yourselves what the old law writers used to call a "sentence of disinherison," and, in the name of progress, would be to cut up the condition of all sound progress by its very roots. Even if the light which experience gives us were, as Coleridge has said, "a lantern on the stern, shining only on the waves behind us," it would still preserve us from entirely loosing all reckoning of our course over the pathless waters. To him who keeps unbroken the continuity of human labors and strivings in any department of study and endeavor, the very errors of his predecessors may be fraught with lessons of wisdom, for those very errors, when once noted and indicated, serve to mark the points at which the mind of man went astray, and it is at these points that history plants her beacons and her buoys for the guidance of the future explorer.

But no amount of learning can dispense the practitioner of the healing art from the bounden duty of interpenetrating all his acquisitions and all his studies with the scientific spirit. The doctor is called by the very nature of his profession to apply in his daily practice, and often on the spur of the moment, the principles of a science which requires him to be not only the faithful servant but also the intelligent interpreter of nature. These principles must be applied according to the methods of exact observation and rational deduction observed in the processes of the inductive philosophy, and hence the demand they make on personal intelligence and logical acumen in all who profess and call themselves doctors. These principles cannot be laid away like a *caput mortuum* in the charnel-house of memory, but must be kept perpetually vivid with all the forces of the mind's best activity in dealing with the phenomena of life, disease and death.

That scientific spirit which is gradually transforming the face of the physical world has long since overtaken the profession of medicine, and is working in it an amelioration to which you can be insensible only at the cost of your repute as men of mark in your calling, and, I may add, at the cost of the lives of your patients—a cost destined soon to be followed by the loss of those material rewards to which the successful practitioner is entitled to look so long as the laborer is worthy of his hire. One of the oldest among the fathers of medicine has said that the human frame, so fearfully and wonderfully made, "by the variety and accordant action of its adjustments seems to utter an anthem of praise to its Maker." When disease invades this frame, and all the

daughters of music are brought low because the harmonic pulses of healthful life have been dashed with discord,

“ Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh,”

how shall the physician learn to restore the order that has been broken, except as he shall have thoroughly comprehended the full compass of the notes to which the Great Composer has set the human form? And with what tender solitudes and pious awe should he regard these “fleshly nooks” of ours, which are the seats of all human joys and of all human sorrow? Never does our frail humanity present a more rightful claim to the best and highest service which science can bring than in those supreme moments of helplessness when the confiding patient places the custody of his life in the hands of his trusted physician, and never does charlatanism appear so atrocious as in those conjunctures where the stakes for which it plays are the highest of all earthly interests.

Believing, as we do, that you approach this ministry with an adequate preparation for its initial duties, and with an adequate sense of its solemn responsibilities, I am now ready to place in your hands the visible tokens of the high service to which you are accredited by these diplomas.

A D D R E S S

OF

WM. B. DRINKARD, M. D., M. R. C. S.

GENTLEMEN OF THE GRADUATED CLASS: In that olden time when chivalry was no mere catchword, but the living spirit of succouring strength, under whose influence the mailed hand of martial law softened its touch to the uses of justice and of mercy—in that time of knightly deeds and simple minstrelsy, all that was worth endeavour or entitled to renown in the work of Christendom was committed to the hands of a few men, with whom lay the power of augmenting their number, by addition to it of such as they might find to fill the necessary measure of merit,—and of perpetuating their order by transmitting its duties to younger aspirants of approved quality. This was done, in every case, with due solemnity, and not without a certain pageantry appropriate to the time and to the occasion. No young knight, unless in exceptional instances, received his right to bear spurs but on due presentation to his senior, and by his accolade, given in public and under the approving smile of the lady whose name was to be illustrated by the falchion and pennon of the new-made champion.

Further back in the world's chronicles, among the earliest records of its authentic history, we find the leaders of the chosen people, then law-givers and priests at once, establishing the succession of their ministration; bringing the designated candidates to the hierarchy before the temple, in the presence of the assembled worshipers, and there anointing them, vesting them with ephod and with mitre, and rehearsing to them, within the hearing of all, their awful functions as mediators between God and his elect.

Still further back, ere we cross the border-line between history and myth, we find other priests, ministers of religion, but specialized as possessors of a healing art, preserving the transcript of their knowledge as a sacred mystery, and handing its practices to others through the medium of a grave and formal initiation, whose rites are lost to us, albeit the truth which they enshrouded has ceased to be a mystery, and

illuminates you to-night with an effulgence that would have dazzled the neophyte of old.

We might go even a step beyond this—if the traditions of your ancient and honorable calling needed any apocryphal additions—and, drawing upon fancy without detriment to fact, discover the prototype of the physician in the grimy caves of prehistoric man, where he has left the scanty record of his surgical daring—imagine him as teaching his fragmentary lore to the callow Mercuries of that undeveloped age—and bidding them reverently to guard and helpfully to use his legacy of unlettered learning.

In all time, then, the most honored classes of the world's labourers have had a care to give to the reception of new members into their ranks a formality, an emphasis, befitting the grave character of the privileges conferred and of the duties undertaken. To be a professional man, has come to carry with it the idea of a charge received, a solemn assumption of obligations.

You are here to-night in obedience to this antique usage, as knights of an order militant in the noblest sense of warfare, as priests of a great apostolic succession, as disciples of that healing art which sprang into the world twin-born with death itself, to have committed to your keeping the weightiest responsibilities that a man can assume. You take upon yourselves now, with the scrolls delivered to you here, to maintain the usefulness and dignity, if not the fame, of a calling to whose undated antiquity the hoary stippling of the Pyramids were but as the down upon the cheek of youth. You commence from this moment to be physicians, and as such, no longer pupils, but brothers in art, we greet you.

Entrusted, as I am, with the duty of bidding you God-speed under that new name, I cannot hope to impress you with all its broad significance; but I rather trust to the occasion itself than to my own words to make this moment memorable to you, a pleasant and not an useless climax to your novitiate. During those years of pupilage which you have just completed, we have taught you the limits and direction of your work, the nature and uses of your weapons; to-night we invest you with the authority to employ, to your own benefit and that of others, the knowledge you have acquired. We open to you the portals of professional life, with all its novelty and all its difficulties; and yet there has thus far been no occasion afforded to any one of us, your teachers,

to advise you on a point of paramount importance,—your attitude towards your new surroundings.

To trace a programme of conduct for a professional career would be to sum up the lives of the wisest, and best, and most successful of our seniors. I do not know that such a compend has ever been satisfactorily executed. I shall certainly not attempt it here. But even a few hints of general direction now, may be of much use to you hereafter, if they point out the right road where a right one and a wrong lie before you, and thus save you purposeless effort and innocent, but dangerous wandering. Circumstances and yourselves must decide whether your path shall be up-hill or down ; to reach the end of your journey at last, it is essential that you should make no false start at its beginning. Your present danger of misdirection lies, not in a want of medical knowledge, but in your natural ignorance of professional *tone*. I do not presume to teach you all that this implies, but I hope to indicate to you the path that leads up to it.

You are about to enter into relations of a twofold and often, apparently, of a conflicting character, those you are to bear towards your brethren in the profession, and those to exist between yourselves and the community. To induce you to ponder these now, so that their due appreciation may remain an instinct with you for the future, is the object of this last, short lesson which I have to inflict upon you.

The practice of medicine, more than that of any other profession, is peculiarly distinguished by its co-operative character. Comparatively few of us are so situated as to be isolated in work ; and those are entirely exceptional physicians whose self-reliance, skill and endurance would enable them to perform their duties thoroughly and conscientiously without having frequent recourse to the advice and active aid of their colleagues. This interdependence of the members of the profession is so well recognized, its requisitions are so unhesitatingly and cheerfully complied with, that the young practitioner finds his greatest comfort in the assurance that a helping hand is always within his reach in moments of doubt or emergency. Nor are these courteous alms confined to the simple bridging over of present difficulties ; that extra-collegiate education which extends through our lives depends, for much of its value, on our intercourse with our fellow-workers. This is the attractive force which tends everywhere to gather physicians together into local organizations, under rules and

ordinances prescribing the rights and privileges of membership, and declaring who shall be entitled to them. To put yourselves within the pale of this communion is your first and most important step on the inception of your professional career. Wherever you may decide to establish your field of action, see at the outset that your title to recognition be confirmed there, in conformity with regular and established usage. Connect yourself with your local guild, make its interest common with yours, and believe that it opens to you the shortest road to good repute. Discipline may at first seem irksome, and a paradox in a liberal profession; certain restraints may appear to you unfair and partial,—until you have suffered by their infringement. But medicine, while the most boldly progressive of sciences, is the most conservative of professions, and must, in that respect, remain what it is until men shall have become other than what they are. You are safe in assuming—whatever arguments to the contrary may be prompted by the bold enthusiasm of youth—that what has, after trial by so many who have preceded you, been deemed worthy to stand, is good enough for you to stand by still; and that, if long custom has sanctioned and strengthened a certain concert of action among the men of your calling, it is wisdom on your part to accept the common usage.

Having become a part of the medical corporation to whose special jurisdiction you belong, and acquainted yourselves with the general rules and traditions that regulate professional intercourse within its sphere, you might well be left to your intuitions of right and wrong to guide you in your personal conduct towards your brethren. The golden rule holds between physicians as between other men, and you will be little liable to error or embarrassment if you follow it, even in ignorance of more specific direction. But occasions may and do present themselves in which we have to resolve questions not of right, but of precedent, etiquette or expediency.

You are not left in the dark on these points; the law is a written one, and if you are unlucky enough to violate it hereafter, you shall not, at least, be able to plead ignorance of its existence. Let me refer you, and earnestly commend your attention to the Code of Ethics of the American Medical Association. Much less well known and studied than it deserves to be, this code, now the supreme law of the profession in our country, sets forth, in a plain, brief digest, concisely, with dignity and without exaggeration, the formulæ which should

regulate professional intercourse. Intended for the government of the profession in the United States, it would answer almost equally well for any other part of the globe; condensed in form, so that its spirit may be readily seized and retained, it is yet so complete that, so far as I can see, it needs no additions; based on principles that are more or less outside of local and temporal influences, it is not likely to undergo rapid change, and will, very certainly, outlast your term of activity. It is a body of law worthy of your examination as one which you are called upon not only to respect and obey, but to defend and promulgate. You will find it easy and satisfactory to shape your conduct permanently by its tenets—for, unlike most other—legal and political—constitutions, it neither requires explanation nor is liable to amendment.

Do not infer, from the stress which I lay upon established usages, that I would have you attach undue importance to those external forms which the public recognise as the “Etiquette of the profession.” But it is because I believe the true spirit of medical intercourse to lie at the origin of these ethical distinctions that I would have you adhere to their literal observance.

Let me venture to suggest, too—however indignantly you may now repudiate the value of any such hint—that a just estimate of your corporate obligations may prove a safeguard against a possible diversion of your talents. That such a danger is possible, and not fanciful, my own limited observation has been sufficient to prove. Around such an imperial stage as that of the practice of medicine there will always be grouped a number of “side-shows,” of more or less pretension and importance—and this is especially the case here in America. All of them basing their title to existence on some salient point of our common knowledge, easily appreciated by the non-professional patron, they enjoy, in their turn, a transitory favor. Some of them would elevate their aspirations to the height of independent professions, and others gather an undeserved strength from the quasi acquiescence of unreflecting practitioners in their fundamental untruths. At a given moment, it may be easy for you to glide into one of those many eccentricities of practice which we are accustomed among ourselves to classify politely under the head of “irregularities.” Some of these by-paths may be seductive in appearance, but they are all thorny ways to honest men. You *may* glean from

them either honor or profit—they will hardly offer you both. Then avoid an unpleasant alternative—maintain your equipoise upon the beaten track—and if you ever *are* tempted to stray, at any rate give the old road a fair trial first.

I feel that the general suggestions I have just made to you are not superfluous ones; to go further in the line of counsel as to your private intercourse with your colleagues is a matter of delicacy, and might seem presumptuous. But, if you consider that I drop the didactic tone to night, and **am** speaking to you out of the fullness of brotherly solicitude, you will not take amiss one or two other fraternal admonitions.

As medicine is eminently a science of observation, not to be gathered wholly from books, it might be, and generally is inferred, that those who have enjoyed the longest period of investigation are those most liberally endowed with knowledge of its manifold problems, and skill in their solution. This is true as a general rule. Long experience with a subject, and constant habit of manipulation, confer that quickness, tact and finish which can only be acquired with time. Years of practical familiarity with the clinical phases of disease will give a redundancy of information which would be phenomenal if it were the acquisition of mere unaided memory. This confers a real value upon the opinions of your seniors, a value which, up to a certain period of life, increases in direct proportion to age; and you have a practical interest in listening respectfully to such opinions of experience, not only because common politeness enjoins it, but also because you will probably gain thereby.

But you must not be misled into accepting as absolute the precept that experience always takes aright. That axiom presupposes that all men reason with equal correctness from the same premises, which is not the case; and ignores the physiological fact that the brain has its period not only of growth and power, but also of arrested development and of waning strength. So, with some men, experience is never a teacher; with all, the time must come when its lessons cease to be fruitful. You will be wise if, while keeping eyes and ears open to catch all that the hoard of old, and young as well, may offer, you do not, at the same time, give up your independence of thought, nor waive your

privilege of criticism and choice, in the selection of your opinions or in the discharge of your duty.

Recognizing the fact that all men are fallible—yourselves perhaps only a little less so than others—you will not be apt to be too tenacious of your own theories, if you have any; you will receive with due caution the ideas which reach you from all sources, and lifting yourselves above all prejudices, you will be gently tolerant of that want of cerebral symmetry which gives rise to their existence in others. You are not to assume that this judicial mental attitude in your intercourse with your brethren is to be maintained as a matter of course, and without effort on your part. It is born of work; it must be sustained by zealous and constant endeavors to improve your own faculties; it must be tempered by the conviction that your loftiest aim is to be worthy of those who have made your profession what it is.

In a word, live so as to turn the edge of Moliere's sarcasm by the diamond brightness and purity of your dealings with your fellow-labourers; and see that you may always, with proud humility, say of yourselves, as we answer for you to-night—*Dignus est intrare*.

Your obligations toward the public resolve themselves into two well-defined groups; those duties incumbent upon you as members of a social and political community; and those you owe to the sick or suffering individuals committed to your care.

All men owe something to the support of the civic entity of which they form part. This is generally exacted either by service on jury or in the field, or by taxation. Doctors are exempt from legal and military impositions; and, unfortunately, taxation has no more than a nominal existence for the most of them. They must pay their quota in some other way, or rather, they pay it in various ways.

In cases of accident or other emergency, the physician is the public servant, charged with the preservation or restoration of working force to the community; in time of peace, he may be called upon to decide important questions touching the public health, or to help justice in its discrimination between innocence and guilt; in time of war, when the integrity of the commonwealth is threatened, he is an indispensable instrument for diminishing mortality and enabling defensive levies to maintain their able-bodied condition; in time of pestilence, he is summoned to his especial field of

honor, to meet a public enemy whose attacks he alone can successfully repel

All these exactions form a tribute to which the community has an indisputable right, and which you have to render promptly and willingly, as in the discharge of your civic duty, whether it happen or not to bring with it a material reward.

But here your obligations cease. Your professional character imposes upon you no burden of duty towards your fellow-man, as an individual. To those members of the community whom casualty or your public position may throw under your hands, you are the obliged minister of an urgent need : but do not for a moment admit that any man who voluntarily seeks your aid has a claim to your unrequited services simply because they are of an uncommercial nature. You occupy the rank of skilled artisans, plying a vocation laboriously acquired, demanding in its pursuit many sacrifices, and requiring for its proper maintenance an unusual outlay of time, pains and material.

Establish your independence at once, by assuming that in the opportunities given you for work, you confer, rather than receive favors, and that, like all labourers, you are worthy of your hire. Your time and trouble are entitled to their recompense, whether in their different characters they be classed with the necessities of life or with its luxuries. The bread we eat is not more important than the stomach with which we digest it ; the clothes we wear, than the limbs they serve to cover. If the wares you dispense have a real value, nothing demands of you to part with them without proper return. I know that a fiction to the contrary is of antique date, and still exists ; but in countries where usage has not given a practical turn to the fiction, I do not see that its retention can benefit any one

Yet, while stoutly resisting any sentimental insinuation that would convert you into the thrall of every man's caprice, are you to regard your profession solely as your means of gaining a livelihood ? Does it present no more inviting or ennobling aspect than this ? I would be sorry to have you undertake it with so restricted an idea of its object and nature.

It cannot be denied, that whatever scheme of creation be received as the correct one, the prime object of each organism is to maintain its existence throughout its nor-

mal term. Human organisms are exceptional in this much—that they are occasionally called upon to decide the comparative values of living or dying. The dilemma is a purely factitious one; for the race, as for all organized bodies, life for life's sake is the end towards which instinct directs the efforts of the individual. Living, for the mass of mankind, means work; and when a man turns his mental or physical energies into a particular channel, it would be folly to say that he does it without the intention of gaining his livelihood thereby. Nevertheless, working for the love of gain, is a vastly different thing from acquiring gain through love of one's work. The world owes you a living, and will pay its debt—you need have no fear of starvation. Earnest, persistent, intelligent performance of your task, as it falls to you, will not fail to bring you means of support and facilities for containing your labors. Fortunate if you obtain more than this, you are entitled to no more, and beyond this your thirst for material possessions must be dissociated from the pursuit of your art. The object of this latter, bear it in mind, is not to enrich you or any one else, but to relieve suffering, to cure disease, to ameliorate the physical (and thereby the moral) condition of your race, and thus aid in its perpetuation and perfection. In the accomplishment of these ends the love of self becomes naturally subordinate to the welfare of the species; and the work of the physician is thus raised above the trivial level of breadmaking.

The career that you have chosen is one that brings you into incessant contact with the need of beneficence, and that confers upon you the power of being a benefactor. Every routine act of your daily duty is more or less a solace to some one; and yet, amid the bitterness of this world, how much more balm is needed than you can hope to bring! Are you, then, to neglect these gracious privileges, or to slur these choicest harmonies in your lifes' music? Rather look upon such opportunities as your most desirable emoluments, and feel that work already well remunerated which is successfully accomplished. Whatever you have to do, it is imperative that you should do it to the best of your ability, if you undertake it at all. But when your work, like virtue, is to be its own reward, let it still be done ungrudgingly, and in a loving spirit. Let its willing performance flow out of that abundant great-heartedness which

recognizes in the common brotherhood of man no distinctions save those that spring from need of pity or of succour.

Far above that sexual impulse which social development has refined into the most ideal and poetic of passions, higher in grade, and nobler in direction even than paternal instinct,—stands that broad, full love of humanity, in which was summed up man's whole duty to man, by the sublime Nazarene, when he said: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor—as thyself."

I could set before you no nobler goal than that to which these words would lead you up. I could flood your path through life with no brighter sunshine than that irradiated by their teaching. Imbued with their spirit, you carry with you all that goes to make up honourable men, useful citizens, worthy practitioners of medicine.

And finally, if you owe us anything, it is the earnest endeavour to transform the power with which we endow you to-night into a result at least akin to this. You may become successful men, and we will rejoice with you; you may become famous, and we will be proud of you; but rich or poor, illustrious or obscure, your Alma Mater, who now confides you tenderly, hopefully, to the world's uncertain chances, will always keep a place in the Walhalla of her cherished names for each of you whose life shall write him—

"As one that loves his fellow-men."

Benedictory,

DELIVERED BY

G. F. JOHNSTON, M. D.,

AT THE

Fifty-Third Commencement of the National Medical College,

Washington, D. C., March 11, 1875.

The words "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off," were spoken more than two thousand years ago, and yet they are to-day excellent advice to newly-graduated doctors in medicine, who, unless they heed them, will make themselves liable to be ranked among that unfortunate class of individuals who are said to "rush in where angels fear to tread."

If the representative of the class of '75 were a jolly old doctor, who had seen years of practice; or had been in the harness as long, and seen as much service as such men as the members of this faculty, then he might hope to entertain this audience with "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn;" but, as he is one of that class who are just putting on the harness, having passed through a curriculum, of which, except in excellent example, oratory forms no part, you will surely not expect from him more than a few words of welcome to our friends, who honor us with their presence here to-night, of farewell to our preceptors and to our fellow-students, the undergraduates of the college, and of congratulation to ourselves, on our entrance into the noble army of doctors.

It is proposed to let Hippocrates, Galen, and all the good old heroes of many commencement addresses, sleep peacefully in their graves; not because they do not deserve our notice, for in the record of the lives of some of the old fathers of the medical profession are to be found the stories of noble deeds of self-sacrifice, and of as great bravery and determination as on any field of science. If we would be stimulated to the accomplishment of any great work, we would do well to

read and ponder their histories. Even the much abused old heroes of bleeding and depletion, are not to be entirely overlooked. They may, perhaps, have killed some of their patients, but they acted up to what light they had. Nor are the doctors of our own time wanting in determination and self-sacrifice. Some of the greatest moral heroes of the age are to be found within the ranks of the medical profession; not the least of whom are those noble men, who, following the example of the Great Physician, have gone forth into heathen lands, giving up the comforts of home and civilization, relieving the bodily pains of these benighted people, and having thus won their hearts, preached to them "Christ crucified" to the salvation of their souls. There are those who quote to us the old and long since exploded saying, "*Ubi tres Medici, duo Athei*," wherever there be three doctors, there are two Atheists. If this libel had not been long ago disproven, the behavior of these noble men would alone have been sufficient to forever put it to silence.

The subject of the structure and functions of the human body, and its care in health and disease, which has formed the basis of our study at this college, is one in which we all should have a deep interest, and upon which I will say this evening a few words. Pope truly says:

"Know then thyself; presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man;"

And yet ignorance and superstition upon this subject are widespread, not alone among the unlearned and ignorant, but among the educated and cultivated, and practitioners tell us that this is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of their successful practice.

How wonderful is the human frame! I never go into the engine-room of a steamer that ploughs the trackless deep, never look upon the "iron-horse" as he speeds along with lightning rapidity, never think of the electric telegraph flashing intelligence from one quarter of the globe to another, making the whole earth but a huge whispering gallery; that I am not lost in wonder and amazement at the mighty inventions of man. But after we have seen them all we find them to be but the weak, ephemeral imitations of what exists in the human economy in inimitable perfection. The body is the abode of the soul, the deep things of which we so vainly study; the soul, which is worth more than the whole world;

the soul, with its magnificent possibilities, its great susceptibility to culture; and if all this were not enough honor for this human tenement, revelation tells us that it is "the Temple of the Holy Ghost," and adds, lest we should lightly esteem this inexpressible honor, "If any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy." How then should we value this magnificent framework, and with what care should we study its wonderful functions! It is unfortunate that many of our systems of education were, for a long time, so deficient in this regard; and that many times, things that should have been taught in the schools, were learned from debased and polluted sources. We meet every day with those who, on account of this ignorance, take pills by the gross; and mixtures and tinctures of every variety by the gallon. Often, too, these medicines are used for some ailment or disease which exists only in their imagination. This is no great exaggeration, for such cases as I have cited are to be found in the every-day practice of any physician of much experience; and what is still worse, many of these people belong to that class who "doctor themselves," and who never consult physicians. They wonder why they are never well; we wonder why they are ever well.

This college has accomplished a noble work. Her sons are to be found in all sections of the country, in the army and navy, and generally in the very front rank of the profession. But if none of these results had been accomplished, she would still have a proud record in that she has instructed so many in the great truths of science which are not learned elsewhere.

For these long years has she stood like a grand old lighthouse, shedding her light upon the surrounding darkness, and by her warning beams has saved many who might have been wrecked upon the shoals and quicksands of the numerous 'isms and 'pathies which lie in the way of the unlearned. I saw one of these light-houses last summer, upon one of our great inland seas, and I have seen them upon the ocean coast, where they are ever a most welcome sight to the storm-tossed mariner, casting their light upon the night's blackness, and warning of the proximity to danger. So, I have thought, has this old college right bravely maintained her stand. The storms of error, superstition, and empiricism have dashed in vain at her feet. She was still unmoved and stood there in all her grandeur. The tempest of civil war, with its devas-

tating power, paralyzing every educational interest of our country, swept over her head, but the old light still burns. Shine on, oh noble beacon! May thine effulgence never lose a ray till the dawning of that morning when the darkness shall give place to the glorious day, when the unknown and obscure shall pass away forever, and we shall know even as we are known.

It is customary at our Commencements to say an especial word of welcome to the ladies who grace the occasion ; and, indeed, the influence of woman over the other sex, has been a fruitful theme, dwelt upon by writers and sung by poets through all time. A subject, indeed, upon which even the dullest should become eloquent—hence a welcome one to the speaker.

Many are the noble women who have understood with Andromache the invocation in the temple and the watching from the wall. Where is the man, of any nobility of character, who cannot be, and has not been influenced by woman ? What hero is there in all history, who has not had his heroine ? See the wonderful influence that Aspasia wielded over Pericles, and what great assistance she rendered him. He was proud to acknowledge her influence over him ; and she shared the lofty distinction which he reached : for he, drawing her after him, crowned her with laurels, and proclaimed her a goddess fit for the Parthenon. Look at the wonderful power wielded by that beautiful “serpent of old Nile,” Cleopatra.

“ A queen, with swarthy cheeks and deep black eyes,
Brow bound with burning gold.”

She retained Julius Cæsar within her enchanted thralldom for long years ; and for her Mark Antony sank the Spartan in him and drew the Sybarite to the surface. How supreme was that power which rivited him to her side, while he saw his Roman veterans disowning their allegiance in favor of Octavius, and the empire he had gained by mighty prowess and hardship, crumbling under his dazzled gaze. But why should we multiply allusions to antiquity when we see around us in every-day life the verification of this fact ? This influence has sometimes been used to drag down and debase ; but, we say it to the glory of the sex, oftener, far oftener, to elevate and ennoble men, and to stimulate them to lofty deeds. Honor to that influence which has always been thrown upon

the side of everything that is true, honest, lovely, or of good report! Your part in the education of Doctors, or, indeed, of any other profession, is no unimportant one. The beautiful flowers provided by your fair hands; and your fairer faces, which put the loveliest exotics to the blush, betoken the interest you feel in this occasion. What a stimulus has the thought of this glad hour been to the oft-flagging energies of this class! How it has whispered to them "Be strong! Be of good courage!" Soon the sheep-skin which has danced before your eyes so long, to which you have so often sighed, "Thou art so near and yet so far!"—which you have often been tempted to think but an *ignis fatuus* which you were ready to give up in despair, is yours." How often have the lonely midnight hours been illumined by fancies of a goal reached, a prize gained, some little rest for the weary brain, some little pause in what Mr. Mantalini would call the "demnition grind," ere we renew the battle, and plunge again into the thick of the fray. I would exhort you then, ladies, to remember these things and make right use of this great power intrusted to your hands.

And now, MR. PRESIDENT, I am assigned the honor of speaking the valedictory words of the class of '75 to you, and to your honored associates of the Medical Faculty, who have so patiently and cheerfully striven to initiate us into the hidden mysteries of our chosen craft. We congratulate you, sir, this evening, upon the signal triumph which has crowned your exertions during the past year. It is due, mainly, to your untiring zeal and efforts that the gift of the honored Corcoran has been secured for Columbian University. Long may that beloved donor be spared to witness the ever-growing glories of the institution enriched by his kindness; and long may you, sir, continue by your talents, influence and renown to preside over her destinies.

To you, PROFESSORS, with whom we have been more frequently associated, we would speak a word of farewell. The old expressions of regret at parting, and gratitude for your devotion to our interests, have been doubtless heard by you till they must sound hackneyed, but they must still be repeated so long as you continue to deserve them. You have been kind and faithful instructors to us, bearing with our faults, and striving to lead us over the difficulties which science so often places in the path of the student. You have taught us not to evade those difficulties, but rather, to grap-

ple with and overcome them ; and have impressed us, not alone by precept, but by noble example, with a high sense of the dignity and importance of your noble profession. Like the transforming spirit, you have touched the scales of ignorance which rested upon our eyes, and have permitted us to look upon the Goddess of Knowledge in all her radiant beauty. Should success attend our professional lives, that success will be largely due to you. Like the shell of the ocean, from which so beautiful a comparison is made by old Dr. Watson, we will ever be mindful of our origin :

“ Shake one and it awakens ; then apply
 Its polished lips to your attentive ears,
 • And it remembers its august abodes
 And murmurs as the ocean murmured there !”

The shell gives forth the sound of its ocean home—We will ever strive to reflect the teachings of Columbian University.

FELLOW-STUDENTS OF THE JUNIOR CLASS, it is the privilege of you who remain at the college, profiting by our mistakes and short-comings, to leave a better record behind you than we have done. Our association together has been pleasant, and it is with regret that we to-night sever the tie that binds us. You have labored faithfully and unselfishly with us to make this occasion a pleasant one. We will ever continue to have a deep interest in you personally, and in your success in life, as well as in the success and honor of our Alma Mater. May she never have to say either to you or to us, “ *Et tu, Brute!*”

CLASSMATES, to you, too, must be said the same sad words. We eight tried comrades have seen together many hard times and many good ones, but to-night we must separate. The familiar old college song well expresses our case :

“ We have fought the fight together,
 We have struggled side by side ;
 Broken is the bond that held us,
 We must now cut stick and slide !

Some will go to Guy’s or Bellevue,
 Some to Paris or to Rome ;
 Some to Greenland’s icy mountains,
 More, perhaps, will stay at home !”

Wherever we may be, however, we will never forget the battles we have fought together, when sometimes we have sustained defeat, sometimes exulted in victory ; and if there has been discouragement and hard work in our way, yet there

is so much that is pleasant to remember in our association together, that we can afford to forget all else.

Have you not seen two old warriors meet after long years of separation, and recount the story of their conflicts, when every scar upon their time-worn frames has its history? How eloquent they become when they fight over their battles, and talk of Palo Alto and Mexico! So, I fancy, may we after long years of practice meet, and go over together the story of the Lecture-room, the "quiz-class," the good old jokes worn gray in the service, the first surgical operation, and the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of our temple, where we mingled with the black-robed priest-hood, and performed the rights of our novitiate. And while there are many sad things about our parting, yet we are joyful too; joyful, because we are young and strong, and life is before us; joyful, because, having attained this, which is no mean height in our onward journey, the panorama of the great, untried future has opened up before our wondering gaze. The path of one may be green and inviting; that of another, barren and rocky; and yet if each one faithfully performs that part of life's duties which falls to his share, he attains a real greatness which far outshines the heroes of the battle-field.

"A sacred burden is this life we bear;
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly;
Stand up and walk beneath it manfully;
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin,
But onward, upward, till the goal we win!"

I thank you for the honor which you have done me, the poorest and weakest of your number, in selecting me to represent you on this occasion. I bid you all God-speed in your life-work. May you ever be attended by Him who alone can make life successful and death triumphant! Vale!
Vale!



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